



SUCCESS STORIES



National Fire Plan

STRIVING FOR HEALTHY FORESTS

A Partnership Between Ecosystems and Fire Management of the Sequoia National Forest

Protecting Ponderosa

Nestled in the Sequoia National Forest, the citizens of Ponderosa breathe easier knowing that their community and the surrounding Giant Sequoia National Monument are being protected by cooperative efforts of the Ecosystems and Fire Management programs of the Western Divide Ranger District.

Surveys of the adjacent forested areas revealed too many small trees and dead branches lying on the ground had accumulated over the years. The conditions were ripe for a devastating wildfire that would have been difficult to suppress.

All of the areas treated by the Ponderosa Urban Interface Project are located in wildland-urban interfaces, along the Western Divide highway just north of the Tail of 100 Giants. Primary objectives of the project were improving residual tree health, improving community protection, reducing human health and safety hazards, and protecting critical Pacific Fisher habitat.

Interdisciplinary efforts between forest health, wildlife, fuels and fire resulted in the treatment of over 1,000 acres surrounding the community Ponderosa during the summer of 2010. The area was treated mostly by hand. These treatments cost roughly \$650 per acre. The small trees were cut and dead branches were collected from the forest

floor and stacked in small piles (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Piles near the community of Ponderosa.

Improvement in tree health and protection of wildlife habitat, private property, and resource integrity were greatly improved. The removal of highly flammable vegetation created an effective fuelbreak and control area for firefighters.

These treatments along with future plans to conduct prescribed burns will significantly reduce the likelihood of losing property or wildlife habitat to a fire. This project has vastly improved the stand conditions by reducing fuel loads, promoted health and vigor of residual trees and greatly reduced the risk of loss of critical Pacific Fisher habitat.



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